

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

- 1 (Original). An image forming apparatus comprising:
 - image forming stations arranged along a sheet transport path, each having an image carrier;
 - a transfer/transport belt for holding and transporting downstream in a sheet transport direction a sheet for an image to be formed thereon by the image forming stations;
 - transfer electrodes in contact through the transfer/transport belt with the image carriers provided in the image forming stations; and
 - a voltage applying device for applying a voltage to the transfer electrodes,wherein the voltage applying device, when a transfer process is not performed, applies a non-transfer bias voltage to only the transfer electrode in contact with the image carrier, the non-transfer bias voltage having the same polarity as transfer bias voltage and being lower than a transfer bias voltage.
- 2 (Original). An image forming apparatus according to claim 1,
 - wherein the voltage applying device applies a higher non-transfer bias voltage to a first transfer electrode positioned upstream with reference to the sheet transport direction than to the other transfer electrodes.
- 3 (Original). An image forming apparatus according to claim 1,
 - wherein the non-transfer bias voltage is increased as an electric potential of the image carriers increases.

U.S.S.N. 10/766,099

Inventor(s): Mashiba

Attorney Docket No. 60707 (49321)

Page 5

4 (Original). An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a sensor for detecting temperature and humidity around the transfer/transport belt,

wherein the voltage applying device adjusts the non-transfer bias voltage in accordance with the detection result of the sensor.

5 (Original). An image forming apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein the voltage applying device applies an increased non-transfer bias voltage to the transfer electrodes as rotational speed of the image carriers increases.